

The following review by John Conkling appeared in the October, 2012 *Fireworks Business*.

Review of “Encyclopedic Dictionary of Pyrotechnics” by K. L. Kosanke et al.

To begin with, this is a book that everyone working in the broad field of pyrotechnics should have, either on a CD or as a hardbound copy. Obviously, a huge amount of work has gone into the preparation of this well-illustrated compilation of definitions for, and discussions of, a broad range of terms associated with the field of energetic materials and energetic devices. This review will use the term “book” for this publication, even if many copies of it will undoubtedly be electronic.

The book covers both the “art” and the “science” of energetic materials. Many fireworks terms, old and new, are covered in some detail, but the book also includes a broad range of additional terms that cover basic science terminology, chemicals, military ordnance, rockets, propulsion, health and environmental issues, and a host of other topics. If there is any term of significance to energetic materials, you are likely to find some mention of it in this work. Numerous illustrations, tables, figures, and references are presented along explanations of the terminology of the broad field of pyrotechnics.

As with any such effort involving multiple collaborators (and it is an impressive list of persons with both civilian and military backgrounds), there is a quite a range of coverage and detail from topic to topic. Static electricity, for example, is covered in one brief paragraph while the topic of fireworks “stars” is five pages in length. The level of the science also varies from topic to topic. These comments are not meant as a criticism, but are intended to convey the fact that the depth of coverage of various topics is related to the detail given by the person contributing the information for inclusion in the book.

I hope that the book will continue as a “living document” and improve even more in coverage in subsequent editions, as more people in the energetic community send in contributions from their areas of activity and interest. Clearly, this book will find a home in the computer or on the bookshelf of people primarily involved with fireworks and other energetic materials, but will also serve as a valuable reference book for people working in occupations such as the regulatory community, the fire service, and legal activities where fireworks and related energetic materials are involved. Hobbyists will also find a wealth of information contained in the book.

If you have ever encountered or needed to know what terms such as drunkard's match, sticky match, or quick match (and many, many other familiar and not-so-familiar terms) really mean, this is a valuable reference for you to have readily available for your perusal. The next time you are seeking an accurate and concise explanation of an unfamiliar energetic term from someone who has been active in the field, this will probably be your first stop for information.

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